

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 132787

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PRUS

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN ELECTIONS: US POLICY

1. THE DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED BY ACCUMULATING INDICATIONS THAT SUPPORTERS OF PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S PARTY ARE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A POSSIBLE CHALLENGE TO THE RESULTS OF THE MAY 16 ELECTION AND A MOVE FOR A NEW OR QTE SUPPLEMENTARY UNQTE ELECTION. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT AS THE ELECTORAL PROCESS DRAGS ON WITHOUT A CLEARCUT RESOLUTION, THE RISKS INCREASE OF RENEWED ACTION BEING TAKEN BY GODR OR THE MILITARY TO SUBVERT THE FREE ELECTION OF MAY 16.

2. THE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT THE PERIOD UNTIL AUGUST 16 (INAUGURATION DATE OF THE NEW PRESIDENT) WILL BE OF DECISIVE IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY,
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ORDERLY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. DESPITE THE VARIOUS CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES OF FRAUD OR IRREGULARITIES IN THE MAY 16 ELECTIONS, THE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH THE OAS OBSERVERS THAT THOSE ELECTIONS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN BASICALLY FREE, FAIR AND AN EXPRESSION OF THE WILL OF THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE. WE CONSIDER THAT A

FRUSTRATION OF THAT EXPRESSION OF POPULAR WILL WOULD BE A MOST SERIOUS SETBACK FOR THE PROGRESS THE D.R. HAS ENJOYED IN RECENT YEARS, FOR OUR INTERESTS IN THAT COUNTRY, AND FOR DEMOCRACY IN OUR HEMISPHERE.

3. TO ASSIST US IN CONSIDERATION OF THE BEST ACTION TO TAKE TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES THE DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE THE EMBASSY'S BEST INFORMATION AND JUDGMENT ON VALIDITY OF CHARGES BY BALAGUERIST SPOKESMEN THAT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REGISTERED VOTERS WERE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE MAY 16 BY IRREGULARITIES IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM'S COMPUTERS. FROM RETURNS REPORTED FROM 52 OF THE COUNTRY'S 82 ELECTORAL BOARDS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT ABSTENTIONS MAY BE IN THE RANGE OF 30 PERCENT, SEEMINGLY HIGH FOR SUCH A HOTLY-CONTESTED ELECTION. THE DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE URGENTLY THE EMBASSY'S VIEW OF THE POSSIBLE REACTION OF THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS BOARD TO A FORMAL CHALLENGE OF THE ELECTION RESULTS, BASED ON ALLEGED COMPUTER IRREGULARITIES, BY THE REFORMISTS.

4. IN ADDITION, EMBASSY VIEWS ARE REQUESTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON (A) BALAGUER'S INTENTIONS RE: THE RESULTS OF THE MAY 16 ELECTIONS AND NEW OR SUPPLEMENTARY ELECTIONS, (B) WHETHER IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO UNDERTAKE

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NEW INITIATIVES TO IMPRESS ON BALAGUER OUR CONTINUING DEEP INTEREST AND CONCERN, AND (C) IF SO, WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR CONVEYING OUR CONCERNS. ONE POSSIBILITY BEING CONSIDERED HERE IS VISIT OF SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TO SANTO DOMINGO TO DISCUSS U.S. CONCERNS WITH BALAGUER.

5. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF HARRASSMENT OR ARREST OF PRD VOTE OBSERVERS IN THE PROVINCES. AFTER FOREGOING DRAFTED, WE LEARNED FROM THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE THAT CONGRESSMAN FRASER HAS PUT A TELEPHONE CALL IN TO THE SECRETARY TO ASK HIM TO RECALL AMB. YOST IN VIEW OF LARGE NUMBER -- 150 IS MENTIONED -- OF PRD MEMBERS BEING DETAINED BY THE MILITARY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. EMBASSY VIEWS WOULD BE APPRECIATED ON ACCURACY OF THESE FIGURES AND THE ADVISABILITY OF RECALL OF AMB. FOR CONSULTATIONS.

CHRISTOPHER

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